

# WEST PENN BASEBALL PROSPECTS

Volume 4, Issue 1

February 2007

## **4<sup>th</sup> Annual All-Star Weekend Set**

Planning for the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual WPIAL Baseball Coaches Association (WBCA) All-Star Weekend is well underway. This year's event will take place on June 15 and June 16. An Awards Banquet will be held on the evening of June 15, followed by an Underclassmen Showcase the morning of June 16 and an All-Star doubleheader later in the day on June 16.

The Awards Banquet is open to the public and will be held at the Green Tree Radisson at 7:00 pm. The Banquet honors the players and coaches selected to participate in the All-Star Doubleheader and the Players and Coaches of the Year as selected by the WBCA.

The Underclassmen Showcase will be held in Washington, PA. The Showcase has developed into the top event of its kind in Western Pennsylvania. The Showcase is open only to 2008 graduates who are varsity starters. Last year's Showcase was attended by 55 colleges (including 29 Division I colleges) and 11 professional teams. Registration for the Showcase will begin in late March or early April.

The weekend's main event is an All-Star doubleheader that features the top seniors in the WPIAL. The first game of the doubleheader will match the Class A and Class AA all-stars and the nightcap will feature the Class AAA and Class AAAA all-stars. Players are selected for the game through a two-step process. First, all high school coaches are asked to nominate seniors from their team for consideration. Then, Selection Committees representing each section undertake the tough task of reviewing the list of players nominated and choosing All-Star game participants.

## **WPIAL Coaching Changes**

Every year brings plenty of coaching changes and 2007 is no exception. We welcome this year's group of new coaches in the area:

Albert Gallatin	Shawn Chory
Avonworth	Tony Babusci
Burgettstown	Doug Tunno
Canon McMillan	Steve Bucci
Fox Chapel	Don Schubert
Indiana	John Fisanich
Jefferson-Morgan	John Curtis
Mapletown	Craig Hoone
McKeesport	Ed Pupich
Mount Pleasant	Scott Bryer
North Hills	Nate Battenfield
South Park	Scott Crimone
Steel Valley	Tim Vickers
Trinity	Levi Bristol

# WEST PENN BASEBALL PROSPECTS

## **New WPIAL Baseball Alignment**

The WPIAL bi-annual restructuring of its sports alignments, based on enrollment, will be in effect for the upcoming baseball season. The new sections are shown below. The most significant changes are Pine-Richland and Peters Township moving from Class AAA to Class AAAA, Trinity and Uniontown moving from AAAA to AAA, Steel Valley moving from AA to AAA, Ellwood City moving from AAA to AA, Canevin and Jeannette moving from A to AA and Laurel moving from AA to A. Also, Duquesne dropped baseball, bringing the total number of teams to 128.

### **Class AAAA – 27 Teams**

<b><u>Section 1</u></b>	<b><u>Section 2</u></b>	<b><u>Section 3</u></b>	<b><u>Section 4</u></b>
Butler	Albert Gallatin	Baldwin	Central Catholic
Kiski Area	Connellsville	Bethel Park	Fox Chapel
North Allegheny	Franklin Regional	Canon McMillan	Gateway
North Hills	Hempfield	Mt Lebanon	McKeesport
Pine Richland	Latrobe	Peters Twp	Penn Hills
Seneca Valley	Norwin	Upper St Clair	Plum
Shaler	Penn-Trafford		Woodland Hills

### **Class AAA – 30 Teams**

<b><u>Section 1</u></b>	<b><u>Section 2</u></b>	<b><u>Section 3</u></b>	<b><u>Section 4</u></b>
Ambridge	Derry	Chartiers Valley	Belle Vernon
Blackhawk	Greensburg Salem	Hopewell	Elizabeth Forward
Hampton	Indiana	Keystone Oaks	McGuffey
Highlands	Kittanning	Montour	Ringgold
Knoch	Laurel Highlands	Moon	Steel Valley
Mars	Mt Pleasant	South Park	Thomas Jefferson
New Castle	Uniontown	West Allegheny	Trinity
	Yough		West Mifflin

### **Class AA – 44 Teams**

<b><u>Section 1</u></b>	<b><u>Section 2</u></b>	<b><u>Section 3</u></b>	<b><u>Section 4</u></b>
Aliquippa	Beth Center	Apollo Ridge	East Allegheny
Avonworth	Brownsville	Burrell	Greensburg Cent. Cath.
Beaver	Burgettstown	Deer Lakes	Jeannette
Center	Charleroi	Ford City	Riverview
Freedom	Fort Cherry	Freeport	Shady Side Academy
New Brighton	Washington	Valley	South Allegheny
Quaker Valley	Waynesburg	West Shamokin	Southmoreland
South Side Beaver			

  

<b><u>Section 5</u></b>	<b><u>Section 6</u></b>
Beaver Falls	Brentwood
Ellwood City	Canevin
Mohawk	Carlynton
Neshannock	North Catholic
Riverside	Northgate
Shenango	Seton LaSalle
Summit Academy	South Fayette
	Sto Rox

### **Class A – 27 Teams**

<b><u>Section 1</u></b>	<b><u>Section 2</u></b>	<b><u>Section 3</u></b>	<b><u>Section 4</u></b>
Bentworth	Avella	Laurel	Elderton
California	Cornell	Monaca	Leechburg
Carmichaels	Chartiers Houston	Quigley	Serra
Frazier	Clairton	Rochester	Springdale
Geibel	Our Lady of SH	Sewickley Academy	St Joseph
Jefferson Morgan	Monessen	Union	Vincentian
Mapletown		Western Beaver	
West Greene			

## WEST PENN BASEBALL PROSPECTS

### **Western Pennsylvania Elite Baseball League**

Last year marked the debut of the Western Pennsylvania Elite Baseball League (WPEBL), an 18 and under league. The President of the WPEBL is Scott Grinder, who spent 13 years as a professional baseball umpire and who is now a scout and the President of Christian Sports International. Vice President is Bob Mollenhauer, who played 5 years of professional baseball in the Oakland Athletics organization and spent 6 years as a college coach.

We thought our readers may be interested in this new league so we contacted League President Scott Grinder to learn more about it. WPEBL's website ([www.wpebl.com](http://www.wpebl.com)) also includes information on its teams and the league.

#### **Q. What led to the formation of the WPEBL?**

Bob Mollenhauer approached me and several others wanting to form a league to keep our best high school players around to play in one league. In October of 2005 the Western Pennsylvania Elite 18 and Under Baseball League (WPEBL) was formed to benefit high school aged baseball players (ages 18 & under) who are considered the best high school players in Western Pennsylvania. It is a league where college coaches and professional scouts would want to look for players and be able to see the top high school players in Western Pennsylvania play throughout the summer.

#### **Q. What was the criteria for selecting teams to participate in the league?**

Teams have been chosen by their ability to teach positive values to their players both on and off the field with the focal point being sportsmanship, integrity, honesty and baseball.

#### **Q. Does the WPEBL have an overriding philosophy?**

The WPEBL Board of Directors along with the coaches has adopted the philosophy of "we want to win, but play with class and dignity". This includes:

1. Working to make sure all games are played and everyone is committed to "spirited competition" without the cutthroat mentality that surfaces in many leagues.
2. Ensuring that all coaches and teams remain committed to providing scores and statistics on a regular basis (scores nightly / stats weekly)
3. Working as a group to promote the league to local media, college, professional organizations, etc.
4. Showing a "United Front" that allows everyone to see that we are one organization with a single objective for the players.
5. Make Championship Weekend and Scout Day the best events possible to bring as much publicity to the league and its players

#### **Q. How did the first season go?**

The first season was a success with eight teams participating. These teams were (with manager in parentheses): Beaver Valley Red Sox (Pat Cutshall), Beaver Valley White Sox (Jory Coughenour), Diamond Dog Baseball (Mike Kosko), Seneca Valley Palomino

## WEST PENN BASEBALL PROSPECTS

### **Western Pennsylvania Elite Baseball League (continued)**

(Phil Eonta & Sid Bream), Diamond Dawgs (Chase Rowe), Steel City Wildcats (Mark Saghy & Bob Mollenhauer), Pittsburgh Traveling Tigers (Ed McCann) and Southwest Bulldogs (John Leonard). It was a summer of learning for us and we did learn a lot about what had to happen to make the WPEBL the best league for high school players age 18 and under. The competition between teams was exactly what we were looking for as on any given night anyone could win.

**Q. Did you have a Scout Day at the end of the first season?**

We did. The season finished on a strong note with Scout Day at Falconi Field in Washington. 91 players participated and over 30 college coaches were in attendance. Colleges attending included Buffalo, Maryland, Elon, Ohio State, Gardner-Webb, West Virginia, Indiana University of PA, California University of PA, Seton Hill, Dennison, and Marietta. Several professional scouts also attended. Scout Day was organized by Jory Coughenour and Mike Kosko with Mark Saghy taking care of contacting college coaches and professional scouts. The day accomplished exactly what we wanted for the players of the WPEBL. A number of players received college scholarship offers by first being noticed at Scout Day.

**Q. Did the league have playoffs at the end of the season?**

Championship Weekend started when Scout Day was over at neutral sites with six teams playing in a single elimination tournament. Slippery Rock University was the site for the semi-finals and finals. Seneca Valley Palomino defeated the Steel City Wildcats and the Beaver Valley White Sox defeated the Beaver Valley Red Sox in the semi-finals. Seneca Valley Palomino prevailed to win the first WPEBL Championship by defeating the Beaver Valley White Sox.

**Q. Were there any individual awards?**

Cory Mazzoni of the Seneca Valley Palominos received the Steve Blass WPEBL Pitcher of the Year. Matt Rosenfield of Diamond Dog Baseball received the Chuck Tanner WPEBL Player of the Year.

**Q. What are you expecting in the 2nd season?**

We want to build on last year and make this the league one where college coaches will want to come to find talent to help their program.

We have added several teams to the WPEBL this season including Springdale (Bill Devine), Independent Players (Jim Basilone), Pittsburgh Tigers (Ray Immekus), Greensburg Huskies (Joe Hill). In addition, the Southwest Bulldogs merged with the Diamond Bulldogs (Mike Kosko). When you look at the WPEBL and see who the coaches are it speaks for itself as the quality of individuals who will coach the kids. The WPEBL has former professional players, professional scouts, former college players and current college coaches as the coaches of the teams.

## WEST PENN BASEBALL PROSPECTS

### Is Junior College an Overlooked Option?

It is not clear how many local players consider Junior College as a viable option when considering playing baseball beyond high school. I think many players and parents think of Junior College as a last resort rather than a preferred course of action.

There are a number of valid reasons, though, to give strong consideration to attending a Junior College. These reasons cover a wide range of situations and include:

- **A player with immediate professional aspirations.** Players who feel they have been overlooked or under-rated in the MLB draft following their senior year in high school may consider the JUCO route because it allows them the opportunity to re-enter the draft the following year. Any player that enrolls in a four-year college is not eligible for the MLB draft for another three years.
- **A player who needs financial aid.** Players requiring more financial assistance to attend college may consider the JUCO route because it is often easier to obtain scholarship money at the Junior College level. Junior Colleges are divided into three divisions – JUCO Division 1 programs can offer as many as 24 scholarships (compared to 11.7 for NCAA Division 1 schools); JUCO Division 2 programs can also offer up to 24 scholarships, but the scholarships are limited to tuition, fees and books (room and board are excluded); JUCO Division 3 programs do not offer athletic scholarships.
- **A player who needs more time to develop, whether it be physical development or gaining more playing experience.** Players are more likely to receive immediate playing time at the Junior College level for two reasons. First, Junior Colleges may play up to 76 games (20 in the fall plus 56 in the spring) while NCAA Division I schools are limited to 56 games. Second, higher turnover of personnel at the two-year school JUCO equates into more playing opportunities.
- **A player who needs to work on his academics.** Players who may need more time to work on their academics should also consider the JUCO route. JUCO makes sense for individuals who may not have the academic qualifications to gain acceptance to the four-year school of their choice, or who may be late developers in the classroom. Coach Jim Chester of Mercyhurst North East calls these student-athletes “light bulb kids”. As he explained to us, “The light bulb goes on late and they realize that they need to hit the books and get an education. When this happens there many students who will do extremely well in the college environment and will end up with good GPAs.” Mercyhurst North East encourages high academic performance by having a feature where students who achieve a 3.5 GPA receive a \$9,000 award to attend Mercyhurst, its sister 4-year Division II school.

See the “links” section of our website ([www.wpabaseball.com](http://www.wpabaseball.com)) and click on NJCAA Colleges to get listings of Junior Colleges in each of the 3 divisions. At the NJCAA home page, look on the right of page under “college search” and then select “colleges by sport”. That will lead to a page where you can get listings of Junior Colleges in each division.

## WEST PENN BASEBALL PROSPECTS

### **Is Junior College an Overlooked Option? (continued)**

Local Division 1 JUCOs include Garrett College (MD) and Potomac State (WV). Local Division 2 JUCOs include Allegany College of Maryland and Mercyhurst North East. Allegheny, Butler and Westmoreland Community Colleges are all in Division 3. In addition, a number of JUCOs, most of them Division 1, from outside the local area have recruited local players over the past few years. This list includes Calhoun CC (AL), Gulf Coast CC (FL), Hill College (TX), Jefferson-Davis CC (AL), Louisburg College (NC), Midland College (TX), Oklaloosa-Walton CC (FL) and Tallahassee CC (FL),

### **Talent and the Recruiting Process in Baseball**

*(The following article was written for us by Martin Rock of College Prospects of America)*

Being a talented baseball player is crucial to playing at the next level. Talent, however, might be one of the lesser factors in the recruiting process. The economics of recruiting in a non revenue producing sport such as baseball dictate that a college coach invest his efforts where he is getting the best use of his investment dollars. It is widely regarded that the most baseball talent resides in the South and on the West Coast.

It is perceived that if you live in the north, unless you throw 100 MPH or hit 50 home runs, a coach is unlikely to spend money to come and see you play. They believe they can find just as good a player, in quantity, in their area. So as a parent, you must invest in getting your just as talented son in front of a lot and the right coaches.

Remember that baseball is a game of failure. And coaches really do scout performance as well as tools and statistics. Therefore after you invest in trips to camps and showcases, you hope your son doesn't happen to have one or two of his failures that day. Kids in the South have many more opportunities to be seen, meaning a single day of failure does not hurt them as much as someone with only one or two opportunities to impress a coach.

In state vs. out of state tuition is also a big factor. Coaches have to offer higher % to out of state kids to make the out of pocket cost for the parents more attractive. The % doesn't always have any relationship to talent, but sometimes is based on affordability. A lot of coaches also factor affordability into their offer by guessing what folks would be willing to pay. Another key factor is whether the young man is willing to travel 4-5 hours from home and live for the next 4 years. They do not always base the offer on talent.

Some states have roster limitations on how many out of state kids they can recruit. Some are mandated by the state, if it is a public school. So if you don't live in that, state the chances of playing there are limited.

Positional need is another huge factor in recruiting. If you are an All - Region outfielder and the college you want to attend doesn't need an outfielder that year, you most likely will not be recruited.

Schools approach academics in several different ways. Some have a limited number of slots on their rosters for kids who couldn't get in without support from the baseball coach. Some have to go in

## WEST PENN BASEBALL PROSPECTS

### **Talent and the Recruiting Process in Baseball (continued)**

front of a review board with every recruit who couldn't have gotten in on their own and make a case for why they should be admitted. Some have minimums that are lower than the general student population that baseball players need to meet. If you think having a 3.3 or 3.5 grade point is enough, think again.

Parents need to remember that there are many more kids than there are spots. Unless you are in the top 25 of your class, you are NOT in the driver's seat. Your son is a commodity and they feel they can easily find someone else just as good, unless of course you are a left handed pitcher throwing 95 MPH.

*CPOA Western PA is part of the globally recognized College Prospects of America Inc. founded in 1986 and based in Logan, Ohio. The largest organization of its kind in the world proudly helps school athletes and their families in 4 continents maximize their opportunities for athletic participation and scholarships in college. Operating in Western PA since 1993, the student athletes we help locally represent students from every major sport in most of the area school districts. Our mission is to offer guidance, experience, and exposure to high school athletes and their parents and to generate admissions, playing and scholarship opportunities based on the student athlete's educational, personal, and athletic needs. Our process is personal and strategically focused in order to make a significant difference in the future of the student athlete.*

*For More Information visit [www.cpoapa.com](http://www.cpoapa.com) or contact:*

*Martin Rock*

*College Prospects of America*

*1016 Faulkner Way*

*Greensburg, PA 15601*

*Phone: 724-837-6006*

*Email: [martin.rock@cpoapa.com](mailto:martin.rock@cpoapa.com)*

### **Local Players in College and the Pros**

Although you would never know it by reading the local newspapers, there are a lot of former WPIAL and City League alumni playing college or professional players. Our latest count shows over 550 college and junior college players and more than 40 professional players. Check out the list of players by visiting the "Where Are They" section of our website ([www.wpabaseball.com](http://www.wpabaseball.com)).

I'm sure we've missed some players, so be sure to let us know via email who they are.

### **Prospect Data Base**

On a monthly basis, we update our data base of local high school players. Players can be included on the recommendation of their high school or summer/fall coach or by sending in their own information. Let us know if someone is missing from our data base. We do our best to include all deserving players but we're bound to miss some. If you are already in our data base be sure to review your bio and send us any updates. College coaches read this information so it is to your benefit to keep it as current as possible.

## WEST PENN BASEBALL PROSPECTS

### College Decisions

Once again, Western Pennsylvania was a popular spot for college baseball coaches as 16 local players signed with or have committed to Division I baseball programs. In addition, several others are currently weighing offers from Division I schools. A complete list of those who have made college decisions is as follows:

John Goray, Seton LaSalle	OF	Maryland – Eastern Shore
Gabe Grinder, Seneca Valley	P/1B	Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Adam Hartwig, North Allegheny	1B/3B	Penn State – Behrend
Andrew Heck, North Hills	SS/P	Duquesne
Ryan Hulme, Center	P	Elon
Matt Katich, Mohawk	C	Notre Dame
Jordan Karcher, Shaler (JUCO)	OF	Florida International
David Kaye, Riverview	P/SS/3B	Pitt
David Klocek, Serra Catholic	IF	Mercyhurst Northeast
Ryan Lang, Mt Lebanon	P	Furman
Joe Leonard, Connellsville	IF	Pitt
Joe Lombardo, Shaler	IF/P	Duquesne
Dave McCarthy, Baldwin	IF	Seton Hill
Nick Merolillo, North Allegheny	OF	Concord
Mitchell Monas, Waynesburg	OF/C	Slippery Rock
Chris Murphy, Fox Chapel	OF	Southern Illinois
Rick Raraigh, North Allegheny	P/OF/1B	Seton Hill
JT Seelman, Thomas Jefferson	P	Grove City
Tommy Shirley, Norwin	P	Xavier
Brett Stackhouse, Chartiers Valley	P	Gardner-Webb
Cole Taylor, Burrell	P	Pitt
Rich Toal, Montour	P/OF	West Virginia
Alex Valadja, North Catholic	P	James Madison
Matt Wier, Mohawk	P	West Virginia

### Important High School Baseball Dates

March 23	Season opens
May 15	WPIAL Playoffs Begin
May 29/30	WPIAL Championships
June 4	PIAA Playoffs Begin
June 15	PIAA Championships
June 15	WBCA Awards Banquet
June 16	WBCA/WPBP Underclassmen Showcase
June 16	WBCA All-Star Game

## WEST PENN BASEBALL PROSPECTS

### **Product Report – College Coaches Online**

For most high baseball players, getting the opportunity to play college baseball involves a lot of self-marketing. Baseball programs don't have the recruiting budgets of their football and basketball brethren and that places a premium on "getting on the radar screen" of the colleges a player may be interested in attending. But how do you refine the list of schools a player may want to consider? When my son was a sophomore in high school we purchased directories and spent hours reading and researching athletic, demographic and academic information about schools in which he might have an interest.

We recently became aware of a very affordable product that can be an invaluable in identifying schools that appeal to a player and also the product also provides contact information for those schools.

**College Coaches Online** was introduced in 2003 by Andy Gold. Gold's son Adam was a highly recruited high school pitcher. Through Adam's experience he became aware of the time-consuming process of researching colleges. An owner of an Apple Computer dealership for 25 years, Andy combined his computer skills with Adam's recruiting experience to develop an easy to use database/search engine that considerably reduces research time and also identifies colleges that may have never been considered as an option.

The product allows the user to provide search criteria including:

- the sport being researched
- the level of college (Division 1, Division 2, Division 3, NAIA, junior college)
- a region or state
- type of school (public or private)
- enrollment
- tuition
- your SAT or ACT scores
- your GPA or class rank

After entering the required or optional information, a list of colleges that meet the criteria is then provided along with the coach's name, telephone number and email address. You can do a "test ride" by visiting [www.collegecoachesonline.com](http://www.collegecoachesonline.com)

**College Coaches Online** can be purchased either in a CD (\$29.95) or through an online web subscription (\$19.95 for three months or \$39.95 for a full year). The advantage of an online subscription is that coach and other information is frequently updated and the online subscription always contains the most recent information.

## WEST PENN BASEBALL PROSPECTS

### **Corporate Sponsorships**

We continue to search for corporate sponsorships that will assure the continued operation of West Penn Baseball Prospects for the next several years. The ideal situation for us would be a single sponsor willing to make a three year commitment for a corporate sponsorship. To put our sponsorship needs into the proper context, our annual budget is in the \$3000 to \$4000 per year range.

We think there are a number of local organizations that would be “natural” corporate sponsors, but we don’t seem to be able to get to the right people in those organizations. Any help in making contact with any of the following organizations would be greatly appreciated:

- McDonalds or Wendy’s
- Pepsi or Coca Cola
- UPMC
- Local banks
- Giant Eagle
- US Army

If you have the name of the “right” person, please let us know and we will contact them. If you know them personally we would appreciate a kind word on our behalf.

We also welcome suggestions for other corporate partnership “targets”.

### **Contact Info**

WEST PENN BASEBALL PROSPECTS is published by West Penn Baseball Prospects, Inc. Any correspondence should be directed to Tony Villiotti at wpabaseball@hotmail.com or 63 Stancey Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15220

### **Website**

WEST PENN BASEBALL PROSPECTS’ website address is [www.wpabaseball.com](http://www.wpabaseball.com). Please visit the website and tell us what you think. Back issues can be downloaded from the website.

### **Donations**

West Penn Baseball Prospects, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) corporation and donations are tax deductible. All donations are used to pay ongoing operating costs (which does not include compensation of any sort) and are much appreciated. Donations can be made either by a check payable to West Penn Baseball Prospects, Inc. or through Paypal by using the “button” on the home page of the website.

### **Want to be listed in our player database?**

Visit our website at [www.wpabaseball.com](http://www.wpabaseball.com) and visit our “players” page. From there you can submit information about yourself through an on-line form.

**We greatly appreciate the very generous donation made to West Penn Baseball Prospects, Inc. by the law firm of K & L/ Gates.**